

the Grand Prairie as a national- and State-chartered institution.

Arkansas County Bank began with humble origins. At the end of their first year of business in 1912, the bank had just \$64,000 in total deposits. By 1919, Arkansas County Bank had its first million dollars in deposits and has seen steady growth ever since.

By 1985, Arkansas County Bank had expanded into Sevier County after purchasing the Bank of Lockesburg. Today, they also have a branch that serves the Stuttgart community.

Giving back is important to Arkansas County Bank. Bank employees regularly volunteer over 1,000 hours annually to charities and service organizations throughout the Grand Prairie of Arkansas.

As Arkansas County Bank celebrates 100 years of business, they are building on the past by looking to the future. With a record of service, Arkansas County Bank is dedicated to beginning a second century of community investment.

Congratulations again to the leadership, employees, and the family of Arkansas County Bank on 100 years of business.

PEACE OFFICERS VS. THE ANARCHY OF THE LAWLESS

(Mr. POE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, when lawless drug dealers, child molesters, wife beaters, robbers, bandits, and other street terrorists threaten our communities, peace officers are always the first ones to track them down.

Peace officers are the last strand of wire in the fence against good and evil.

These men and women put themselves in danger every day in order to protect us and our families. Some put on the uniform and badge and do not return home after their shifts.

There has been an alarming 75 percent increase in police officer deaths since 2008. The year 2011 was the first time more officers died at the hands of street thugs than in car crashes. In many instances, the killers were repeat offenders who shouldn't have been roaming the streets in the first place.

As we approach Peace Officers Memorial Day in May, we have to support those that protect the homefront. They are what separate us from the outlaws and the anarchy of the lawless.

And that's just the way it is.

PRESERVING HEALTH CARE CHOICES FOR AMERICANS

(Mr. PAULSEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, more and more American consumers are discovering a provision in the President's new health care law that prevents them from buying simple, over-the-

counter medications using their health care savings accounts or their flexible spending accounts unless they first get a doctor's prescription.

Instead of walking into their local drugstores to use their HSAs or their FSAs, Americans are now forced to visit a doctor and pay a standard copay before finally receiving a prescription to buy medicines like Advil or Claritin. Does this sound burdensome? That's because it absolutely is.

Mr. Speaker, millions of Americans use HSAs and FSAs for their flexibility and portability, yet this new health care law is taking that away and is wreaking havoc on patients and also increasing burdens on physicians.

We need to repeal this onerous provision, and that's why I've introduced legislation that does exactly that, with bipartisan support.

Mr. Speaker, this week, the House Ways and Means Committee will hold a hearing on the use of HSAs and FSAs on over-the-counter medicine practices, and I hope we'll all agree that individuals, families, patients, and doctors make the best decisions for their health care needs, not the government. It's time to do away with this onerous prescription requirement.

□ 1920

HELP RECENT COLLEGE GRADUATES WHO CAN'T FIND JOBS

(Mrs. MILLER of Michigan asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my support for the extension of the current student loan interest rates.

Every young American who works hard and studies hard deserves a shot at the American Dream. Unfortunately, the economy, led by President Barack Obama, is denying them the opportunities that they need. Actually, according to an Associated Press analysis, over 53 percent of young college graduates aged 25 or under, which is 1.5 million young Americans, are unemployed or they hold low-wage jobs that don't require them to use the degrees that they just obtained.

Our approach to help young people is about more than just the interest rate that they pay on their loans; it's about creating an economy that gives them a chance to apply the knowledge that they worked so hard to learn. That means not raising taxes or imposing new regulations on the very job creators that will offer opportunities to our young people. It means opening up energy reserves to lower prices at the pump because, guess what, Mr. Speaker, young people also are paying these high gas prices as well.

Let's stop the rise in student loan interest rates, but at the same time let's get this economy moving so that America's young people can achieve their dreams.

STAFFORD STUDENT LOAN PROGRAM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. COURTNEY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, we are here today, Tuesday, April 24, to talk about an issue which, again, middle class families all across America are watching very closely. As the chart next to me indicates, in 67 days, the interest rates on the Stafford student loan program, a loan program which serves over 7 million college students all across America, is slated to increase its interest rate from 3.4 percent to 6.8 percent.

This program, which over time today has served roughly about 35 to 40 million Americans, is a critical component for middle class families to provide affordable higher education, which today, in the 21st century, is almost as important as having a high school education.

The Stafford student loan program's interest rate was cut in 2007 as a result of the passage of the College Cost Reduction Act, a measure which cut the rate from 6.8 percent down to 3.4 percent. Unlike this Congress, it was a bipartisan effort—77 House Republicans voted for that measure; 35 Republican Senators voted for that measure. George W. Bush signed it into law, President Bush, to his credit, and it provided, again, great relief for students all across America for an issue which we now know from the Federal Reserve Bank threatens, really, the financial solvency of America's middle class.

College student loan debt today now exceeds credit card debt. It exceeds car loan debt. One of the few safe harbors that exists in the system for students is, in fact, the Stafford student loan program. It has great bipartisan genealogy and sources.

Stafford was actually a Senator, Robert Stafford, from Vermont, a Republican, who, again, believed in education and was somebody who understood that the cost of college and university education is not what it used to be and that we had to give, again, middle class families better tools to pay for it.

Anyone who has dealt with the private student loan market knows that the rates today are roughly about 9 to 10 percent. Interest accumulates from the day the loan is taken out. If you're a freshman at a 4-year university, you accumulate interest for the entire time that you are in college using those loans. There is no forbearance. There is no timeframe in terms of repayment. Again, it is nondischargeable in bankruptcy if a person gets into great financial difficulty.

The Stafford student loan program, in contrast, has affordable rates—3.4 percent. There is a forbearance period, after a student graduates, of 6 months before payments commence, and no interest accumulates during the time